

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of forming  
5 adjacent holes on a semiconductor substrate, wherein  
the adjacent holes separated by a fine line structure  
are a first hole and a second hole, the method  
comprising:

10 providing a semiconductor substrate with an  
insulating layer on the substrate;

forming a step-shaped structure on the surface of  
the insulating layer, the step-shaped structure  
comprising a first horizontal surface, a second  
horizontal surface, and a vertical surface between the  
15 first horizontal surface and the second horizontal;

depositing a sacrificial layer with an average  
thickness on the first horizontal surface, the second  
horizontal surface, and the vertical surface;

20 forming a patterned photoresist layer on portions  
of the first and second horizontal surface;

performing an etch-back process to remove the  
sacrificial ~~sacrificial~~ layer not covered by the  
patterned photoresist layer and form a spacer on the  
vertical surface;

25 removing the patterned photoresist layer; and  
using the spacer and the remaining sacrificial  
layer as a hard mask to remove the insulating layer  
to form the two adjacent holes.

30 Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein a  
bottom width of the spacer is approximately equal to  
a width of the fine line structure.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the width of the fine line structure is approximately smaller than the 100 angstroms (Å).

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Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the insulating layer comprises undoped silicate glass (USG) and borophos-phosilicate glass (BPSG).

10 Claim 5 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the insulating ~~the insulating~~ layer comprises a first insulating layer and a second insulating layer on the first insulating layer.

15 Claim 6 (currently amended): The method of claim 5, wherein a surface layer of the ~~[[ofthe]]~~ first horizontal surface and the second horizontal surface is the first insulating layer.

20 Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 5, wherein the first insulating layer is an USG layer, and the second insulating layer is a BPSG layer.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim 1,  
25 wherein a step height difference is ~~difference is~~ formed between the first and second horizontal surface, and a thickness of the sacrificial layer is approximately equal to the step height difference.

30 Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the sacrificial layer is a liner silicon nitride layer.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the etch-back process is a dry-etching process.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein  
5 a height of the first horizontal surface is lower than a height of the second horizontal surface.

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